MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE

october 1986

NOW INCLUDING THESE ATARI CLUBS:
C.H.A.O.S. -- LANSING AREA
G.A.G. -- FLINT AREA
C.A.C.E. -- JACKSON AREA

still 1.00

Atari News

The big news this month is ATARI GOES PUBLIC (ownership, that is):

ATARI CORP. PRESS RELEASE, Sept. 18, 1986
(Excerpted)

(Sunnyvale, CA) Atari Corporation announced today that it has filed a Registration Statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission for an initial public offering by the Company of 4,500,000 shares of Common Stock (and up to an additional 675,000 shares that may be purchased by the Underwriters from the Company to cover over-allotments) through an Underwriting group to be managed by PaineWebber, Incorporated. The price range is anticipated to be between $11.50 and $13.50 per share, and the offering is scheduled for mid- to late October. A written prospectus with respect to the offering will be available from PaineWebber, Incorporated.

A registration statement relating to these securities has been filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission but has not yet become effective. These securities may not be sold, nor may offers to buy be accepted prior to the time the registration statement becomes effective.

For more information, please contact Greg Pratt, Chief Financial Officer of Atari Corp. at (408) 745-2349.

In a generally positive artical the day following the press release, the WALL STREET JOURNAL reported that the offering would be a 16% share of the company, showing ATARI is valuing itself at around $350 million dollars. Jac Tramiel and family bought ATARI from WARNER COMMUNICATIONS for $240 million and will use much of the funds generated in the sale to pay the reamianing debt owed WARNER. The Tramiels will retain a 53% interest in ATARI.

The stock is expected to be good investment. Jack Tramiel has taken a company known to have a significant past profit record (before several years of large losses) and built it back to over 12 million dollars of profit during the first half of 1986.

Conjecture at user-groups across the country centers on "what if" all the clubs and users snatched whatever stock they could... and made Jack pay more attention to his customers, the users!

APPLE finally got in the 16-bit home market this month with the announcement of the APPLE IIGS. Billed as a "high end product for families with kids and for the home office", it offers some of the color graphics and sound (that's the G and S) of the ATARI ST and COMMODORE AMIGA.

Despite the fact that the MACINTOSH shares the same 68000 cpu with the ST and AMIGA, the new GS will act more like those competitors than the MAC does. Offering the same 4,000+ colors as the AMIGA, it goes further and ads 32 voices plus a speech sythesizer.

The biggest asset of the new processor is that it retains the ability to run about 90% of the existing APPLE II software base as well as new programs designed to use its extra power. In fact, an upgrade kit will be available for the IIe to the new GS system.

Although the AMIGA may have to share a price bracket with the new APPLE, the ST market should be unscathed. Prices will be around $1,900 for a color setup with 256k and drive, and $1,500 for monochrome. The upgrade for the IIe will be about $500.

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This publication is the official newsletter of several independent groups of Atari 8-bit and 16-bit computer users. It is intended for the information and education of their members as well as the dissemination of Atari related information. Opinions expressed in this publication are those of the respective author and are not in any way official opinions of the associated user groups.

Other non-commercial USER GROUPS are granted permission to reprint articles from this magazine provided credit is given to the respective author as well as to the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine. Most original files are available from the C.H.A.O.S. BBS upon request, and also appear in DL7 on COMPUSERVE for downloading.

Subscriptions to the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine are included with memberships in any of the participating clubs, or directly from the MAGAZINE for $12.00 per year to addresses in the U.S. Use the address below for subscriptions and inquiries.

SUBMISSIONS

Submissions from readers are encouraged. If possible, please make your submissions by electronic means. Submissions are accepted on the C.H.A.O.S. BBS (517-371-1106), or on disk-by mail or by giving a disk to an Editor. All submissions must be received by the 20th to be considered for the next month's issue.

NOTES TO OTHER CLUBS

Please be certain that you are mailing to the correct address (be sure which club it is that is exchanging this magazine with you!) (See below) and NOT to the return mail address. Exchanges of newsletters are encouraged.

C.H.A.O.S.
Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine
PO Box 16132
Lansing, MI 48901

We are also soliciting other Michigan Atari clubs for affiliation with the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine. We can offer MORE total pages and LOWER production costs per copy, with no loss in your local input. Contact C.H.A.O.S. for more information.

Editor's Note

Rich Barnes - Managing Editor
MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE
(517) 349-0513

Another month has passed and once again it's time to publish the newsletter. This month we have received articles and reviews, not only from our own readers but also through the courtesy of Compuserve's DL7 Section as well as Z-Magazine. The exchange of this information is vital to all. The more that we know about our systems, the more valuable they become.

We would also like to welcome the GENESEE ATARI GROUP from Flint, MI. and the CASCADES ATARI COMPUTER ENTHUSIASTS from Jackson, MI. both newly introduced to our newsletter. These groups produced excellent newsletters of their own in the past. We hope that the editorial staff of these groups will continue to process information from their clubs and continue to support our efforts to provide a quality newsletter.

Deadlines are a bit of a pain, but unfortunately are a necessary evil. We would appreciate every effort being made to meet them as it allows us to publish and get the newsletter to you on time, which was the main objective at the start.

If you wish to submit an article, opinion, comment, tip, program, etc. please do so. We don't always have the room to publish everything we receive, but if it isn't in this issue, it will most probably appear in the next. To those of you that have submitted articles, thank you. We appreciate the support and hope that you will continue. To those of you that haven't got around to it yet, please don't hesitate to get involved. This is your newsletter and it will only grow and prosper if you want it to. Other groups in the Mid-Michigan Area are also considering joining our efforts. We sincerely hope that they do, for this not only increases the reader base, but also allows for the submission of more articles and information. Atari users have always been noted for sharing information in the support of each other. What the company has failed to do, they have provided for themselves.

To those groups that have joined us and to our new readers, We say welcome. This is your publication as well as ours. Together we can make it a success and watch it grow. Thank You!

CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY

SERVING THE LANSING AREA ATARI

C.H.A.O.S. is the CAPITOL HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY, serving the ATARI community of the Lansing, Michigan area. The CAMPUS HILL ATARI OWNERS SOCIETY is the Michigan State University chapter of C.H.A.O.S.

Membership dues are $12.00 per year and entitle the member to a 1 year subscription to the Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine, a free disk from our regular library, access to our other libraries and facilities as well as access to our other resources.

Dues may be paid at any regular C.H.A.O.S. meeting or by mail. If not using an official Membership Application, please include your Name, Address, Phone and a list of your equipment and interests.

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C.H.A.O.S.
PO Box 16132
Lansing, MI 48901

Meetings take place on the 2nd and 3rd Saturdays of each month, at the MSU Physics-Astronomy Building, Physics Road, Room 118. Meetings begin at 10:00 am sharp and last until 1:00 pm.
S.T.IN.G. (S.T. INterest Group), for Atari ST owners, meets on the SECOND Saturday of the month.
The General meeting, for 8-bit Atari owners, takes place on the THIRD Saturday of each month. DIRECTIONS TO MEETING PLACE:
East Grand River to the Collingwood Entrance for MSU. The first available left turn is Physics Rd. The Physics-Astronomy Building is about 1 block from the corner, on the right hand side. Park in the gated lot just past the building.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER
By Leo Sell

If everything is going right, you should be reading this before the October meeting. Timing is critical for us this time since there are two important events taking place on that weekend. As in years past, the annual CHAOS auction will take place at the October meeting. You are welcome to bring things to sell 10 percent consignment, and of course to bid and attempt to get a bargain or two. There is always a great assortment of hardware and software and miscellany. It is a great chance to sell some seldom used software (original only please) and hardware (we'll take anything) and to get a few great deals too! Please come a little early to register both the itmes you are selling, and to register as a buyer. Going once!

The October meeting is the day before the Fall Computer Show at the Clarion. As we were last spring, CHAOS will be there. It is my hope that you will participate in 2 ways. One is by buying your ticket(s) from the Club and attending. The other is by helping out - through the donation of time and use of equipment for the day. It takes many people, out front, and behind the scenes, to make a good presentation. Call John Baker (CHAOS Head Librarian) and volunteer. It's a lot of work and a lot of fun. The opportunities to pick up software and hardware at low prices are excellent. I hope you'll be a part of it!!

Speaking of being a part of things. We have been promoting the idea that people need to get involved. Well, I'd like to thank those that are involved for all their help. Without John Nagy, there would be no Mid-Michigan Atari Magazine. As Sysop, he also kills himself trying to keep the CHAOS BBS one of the best in the country.

Our present crew of Librarians, John Baker, Sally Nagy and Malcolm Cleveland, are doing an outstanding job providing high quality Public-Domain programs for the Club. Brian Goluska is doing a great job with the ST group. Richard and Judy Barnes, Jeff Bone and Marv Goldstein are all pitching in with the newsletter. Gary Ferris is faithful with the membership records and we can always count on

Richard Evans to bring the Publications Library. Guy Hurt has been bringing us fine programs at the meetings. The list goes on. But, that doesn't excuse you if you are not involved. Many more jobs need done, such as Publicist for the Club, and many of the jobs being done need to be spread out a little more. Jump in today...see YOUR name in lights!!

I would like to congratulate Central Park Computers (formerly Pro Video) in Okemos. As far as I know, they are now the only 1040ST dealer in town. They also merit congratulations for their fine new store. It is very elegant. I wish them the best.

I have just moved from one house to another as I write this. Things are still in a terrible uproar. Because of that, and because I haven't had a chance to research the question, the article on DOS functions from BASIC will be delayed....Indefinitely fromthe looks of this house.

So long...see you at the meetings and the Show.

ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICERS OF C.H.A.O.S.

Position	Name	Phone #
President	Leo Sell	393-7792
Vice President	John Nagy	487-5646
Sec'y-Treasurer	Gary Ferris	393-2593
8-bit Rep.	Adam Slonim	485-7348
16-bit Rep.	Barry Schroeder	627-6708
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Library Manager	John Baker	641-4430
Asst. Librarian	Malcolm Cleveland	485-6743
Asst. Librarian	Sally Nagy	484-1976
Publ. Librarian	Richard Evans	351-2381
Program Coord.	Guy Hurt	484-7675
ST SIG Coord.	Brian Goluska	332-4415
BBS System Op.	John Nagy	487-5646
BBS Librarian	John Baker	641-4430
Newsletter Editor	Jeff Bone	321-5510

C.H.A.O.S. SEPTEMBER 8-BIT MINUTES
By: Gary Ferris, Secretary/Treasurer

With summer coming to a close, it seems people are starting to get back into the computer habit. There was an excellent turnout of over 60 people.

Volunteers to work the CHAOS tables at the October 19 show were requested. If you can help, please contact John Baker or leave a message on the CHAOS BBS. This includes your time, equipment or both.

Frank Nagy Gave a presentation about a special insurance rider which would cover your computer for somethings which your regular homeowners policy will not cover. Contact Frank for more info.

Xtal by Antic Software was demoed. It's a Star Raiders type game which looked very good at less than $20.

John Nagy showed us (what else?) another excellent Disk of the Month, which featured an excellent music program by CHAOS's own Ryan Bennick (excellent job Ryan!).

Guy Hurt demoed a Party Quiz question generator program written by Richard Evans. The program allows you to make your own data disks for PQ. A short game was played using Guy's questions which was won by Brian Goluska. (What do you expect? The ST's supposed to be smarter.) (he he)

The balance in the treasury is $954.77

Don't forget October 18 is the annual CHAOS auction. Bring your equipment and original software which you wish to sell, and bring your checkbook to buy some bargains.

ST-UMBLINGS
By Brian Goluska

This month ST-UMBLINGS replaces ST-UTTERINGS, because the ST part of CHAOS has had some misfortunes lately. Mike Clewley, our librarian for the ST disk library, has resigned, although he is still interested in helping with some CHAOS activities. Our September meeting had a room mix-up, and therefore we couldn't set up a demo machine. (We did have a very good discussion, however). And our attendance is down! On the plus side, the September meeting had 2 new ST owners, and 2 people with ST's on order. One of the new owners is Mitch Wells, who gave the MIDI demos at last May's show, and at a CHAOS meeting this summer.

(If you missed Mitch's demo at CHAOS, you missed a lot. Here is a guy who says "we'll just have some fun". Then he goes "plinkity-plinkity-plink" on his keyboard, and the Atari 800 picks up the rhythm. You think, what's this "plinkity-plink" stuff?

Then Mitch begins adding instruments one at a time. In a short time he's playing music that sounds like the sound track of a movie, being played by 50 people. He had, of course, various extra hardware like "drum machines" being controlled from the computer.)

But as much as I welcome Mitch to the ST, I need to get serious. I'm going to put on my Leo Sell hat, and plead for ST members to contribute more time and effort to CHAOS. I'll plead, cajoule, and beg:

"OK you goof-offs, get your _____ to the meetings, and bring in the new software and

hardware you've been buying. We also need a new librarian, and someone with 'Deep Pockets' to buy one of every hardware and software product that comes on the market."

Done with sermon.

At the September meeting we discussed ANTIC'S START and COMPUTE'S ST issue, and the merits of each. It seems that both magazines are experimenting with ST issues with disks, where program listings and such are not printed, but only on the disk. ANTIC also sells START without the disk, for 1/3 the cost. Reaction is mixed. It seems that we as users will have to experiment also. It seems to me that both magazines will have to insure top quality with every issue to make the idea succeed. At $5, I can buy a crummy issue, and maybe try it again later. At $15, I'll feel burned if I get a single crummy issue. So both the magazines and the users will be feeling the situation out. ("Hey, Deep Pockets, how about you buy some subscriptions, and let us know if they're worthwhile?")

Many other topics were touched on. Mitch said that European MIDI software was beginning to show up in the US, albeit still very expensive. Problems with mail order companies, and how to avoid them, took up a lot of time. Some mail order companies are very good, and apparently cause few problems (come to a meeting and I might name names). Which hard disks and which inexpensive modems might be reliable was a topic, which seemed to be answered "wait a month".

I'll wrap up with another simple tip that I learned this month. I have complained earlier that TOS options sometimes allow the carriage return to execute an option, while a similar display will make the carriage return cancel or abort. The correct convention is that the option with a bolder outline will be the one chosen with a carriage return. Those of you with color monitors might wonder why it took me so long to figure this out.

Next month: Re-STrengthening?

Disk Library

The Library Table
By: John Baker

Deadlines!!!!! Can't seem to get with the program when it comes to meeting deadlines. The newsletter editor was nice enough to call me after I had missed the deadline for submitting my article. Heck, I was only 2 days late. I mean shheeeesshhhh!!!! what do people want??? perfection?!!

Procrastination is part of our American rights. If that's denied, what's next?, mom's apple pie! C'mon now! We don't want to set a precedent here. Whew, I feel better after getting the air cleared on the inalienable rights that are supposed to be afforded newsletter article writers.

Things are picking up and looking up as far as 8-bit software is concerned. Public domain programs, for the most part, are more impressive than ever. The renewed interest in 8-bit machines spurred on by the upgrade mania is a welcome sight.

Speaking of upgrades, we have in the library, a complete disk of all needed files for upgrading and utilizing the 800, 800XL, and 130XE. Ramdisk drivers, DOCS, and information files are included.

Use your upgrade with one of the top notch terminal programs we have, and the amount of new software within your reach by phone jumps astronomically. Your phone bill also takes a substantial jump, but that's another story.

The bottom line is that all this "free" software can be very expensive. That is where your library takes some of the bite out of obtaining decent new stuff.

Need word processing software? Speedscript is very good. The fact that Speedcalc, a good spreadsheet program, comes on the same disk, with complete DOCS for both files makes things sweeter. The new Textpro is in a class by itself. Very extensive and complete DOCS with this one.

If you are missing programs from ANALOG or ANTIC, check with your club librarian or with us here at the meeting. Our Disk of The Month offers an assortment of programs and is a real value, a combination that is hard to beat.

All library disks are only $5.00 each or 5 for $20.00. We were having Leo, our distinguished president, personally autograph each library disk sold, but found disk sales to take a dramatic increase when that practice was discontinued. Talk about gratitude!
By the way, if you are looking over the library listing and see an item that you need before the next meeting, give me a call, and I can arrange to have it winging to you through the good old U.S. mail.

Don't forget the big C.H.A.O.S. auction and free-for-all in October. Bring your goodies (hardware,software--ORIGINAL) to sell, and your checkbook, or good old cash for buying. See you there.

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THE CHAOS DOWNLOAD
By John Nagy

Fall means more people at meetings and more people on the BBS. We have been adding over 100 new users each month... and dropping nearly that many too. It's a fact of space that we have to drop users who don't use. Our user base is now hovering around 400... and it can't really go higher. Fortunately, many "new users" are calling long distance and never return, so they can be dropped without problems.

But if you are a local user who finds out your password at CHAOS is no longer recognized, don't take offense... you just were gone too long! Just sign up again, you will get your old access level right back!

I am making program changes to make the sign-on faster. Right now, if you are at the end of the user list, it takes over a minute to find your password file. By moving the operation to RAM, that can be cut to under 10 seconds... but the change is proving to be trickier than it seems. I also want to add CITY and STATE for each caller, as we get so many national calls. It is fun to see where all these people you converse with daily are REALLY calling from!

New at the BBS is ZMAGAZINE, put together by a very busy RON KOVACS of CHICAGO. He assembles over 200 sectors (over 10 pages) of articles focusing primarily on the ATARI COMPUTER each WEEK! Contributions come from all over (he includes articles from OUR magazine too!). Another feature is a look into some of the biggest and best BBS's around the country- title screens, menus, some messages, and a look at their download contents. All very entertaining.

Look for a new ZMAGAZINE each week in our new files section... we will keep the current issue plus the previous one online for you. Either download with the DISPLAY option to read it all on-line, or take it and the two utilities, ZREAD and ZPRINT, to enjoy as you like off line. ZREAD will allow you to choose an article from anywhere in the issue to read out-of-sequence, plus do individual screen dumps (watch for a smoother operating version available soon).

The best way to describe ZMAGAZINE is to say, "LOOK AROUND". A number of articles from ZMAGAZINE are in this and will be in future issues of MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE.

If there is interest by members without modems to see ZMAGAZINE, we can put all the issues on a disk with the ZREADer and offer it in the disk library each month... it will take up BOTH SIDES!

Speaking of those "disenfranchised" members with no modem to call their own, how about this: A used 1030 should be available cheaply enough that CHAOS could buy one to sign out at the meetings. Members could use it for, say, two weeks, then hand it over to another waiting member. This way, those who are unsure of their "need" or "desire" for a modem would have a real chance to find out without wasting the money if they aren't really into it. I am sure that this would result in a nearly 100% conversion rate... who would have believed that it would be so much fun until they tried it? Let's talk about this possibility at the next meeting!

Til next time, see ya in CHAT - CHAOS BBS (517) 371-1106

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VIEWPOINT

JUST MY OPINION
by Leo Sell

I am growing more and more concerned about the lack of retail outlets for Atari products, both 8-bit and 16-bit. There are a number of purported reasons for this: smaller user base, piracy and etc. But I think the fault lies deeper - with Atari Corporation itself. When the Tramiels took over, we all expected the "New Atari" to display some of the marketing genius that made Commodore number one in HOME comuputing. Instead, what we see is a shoestring marketing effort, based on the use of User Groups to "spread the word". I am not so certain that we in the user groups are not being unfairly taken advantage of.

The total lack of marketing of the 8-bit line, and the near lack of marketing for the 16-bit computers, is something I find truly objectionable. No one outside of user groups and a limited part of the computer industry, knows anything about Atari computers. It galls me to see the high-tech, high-value Atari, relegated to an afterthought. Those in the know realize the high VALUE factor that Atari computers have. They have always been more computer for the money. But Joe Average,

watching Monday night football and thinking about a computer for his kids, has only the information from Television commercials. Yes Jack, Joe Average is more likely to believe those Apple and Commodore commercials than to ever research his choice of computers. We users know, that on a head to head comparison, Atari Computers will outperform everything in their class, especially taking into account the Price/Performance ratio. But, since Jack and Company are not getting Atari Computers into REAL Computer stores, or advertising or marketing in any noticable fashion, Joe Average will not have a chance to see and compare. He will walk right past the Atari section at Toys R Us and buy a Commodore, or he'll go to a Computer Store and buy and Apple, and think he has a great Home Computer.

The same is true in the Business market. Since the Atari computers are not seen in ComputerLand, or Entree or Businessland, etc, the average businessman and the average MIS manager have no inkling of their power and value. Try suggesting an Atari computer to the manager of a major DP installation. The peals of laughter will follow you right out the door.

Jack, you have continued the Atari tradition of high value, and we appreciate that. But you have also continued to make the same mistakes in marketing that the Old Atari did, plus you have repeated some you made while at Commodore.

You have to get the word out, Jack. The people who would buy, don't know about Atari. As far as the 16 and 32 bits, you had best get some kind of niche going there. Challenge the Mac in the Desktop Laser Publishing field. Market the computers as low cost mainframe terminals. Get the CDRom out. Stop resting on your previous reputation. Stop making it so difficult for small (but legitimate) computer stores to sell the ST. You must start marketing in a National, visible manner, and you must make the products more easily available. Otherwise, there is little hope left for Atari's future.

Atari News

TAG (Tri-City Atari User's Group) will be coming aboard the MID-MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE in the November issue! Two new columns will be added to the general interest area - another ST column, and "Piece's Of Eight" (Bits, that is). TAG serves the SAGINAW, BAY CITY, and MIDLAND area and has a very strong ST following.

MICHTRON, one of the leading producers of ST software, will be the feature of the November TAG meeting. Michtron will be on hand to demo their products on both monochrome and color ST systems. There will be a question and answer period. EVERYBODY IS WELCOME!! Directions on how to get to the meeting will be in the TAG area of the November MID MICHIGAN ATARI MAGAZINE. (Or call LeRoy Valley at (517) 686-6796.

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C.A.C.E. is the Atari Club in and around the Jackson county area. The main purpose of the club is to help inform new users, and to promote the use of the Atari Computer in the community.

OFFICERS:

President	Wolfgang Mueller	789-8917
Vice-President	Bob Kingsbury	789-6642
Secretary	Rick Sullivan	783-6652
Treasurer	Scott Boland	784-9246
Member at Large	Joe Garner	787-1873

MEMBERSHIP:

The current membership dues are $10.00 per year, and are payable at any of the C.A.C.E. monthly meetings, or by mail to the P.O.BOX.

Club membership includes access to the entire club software and publication libraries, along with a monthly published newsletter.

CORRESPONDENCE:

Any written communications with C.A.C.E. should be sent to:

C.A.C.E.
P.O. BOX 6161
Jackson, Mich. 49204

MEETINGS:

Our meetings are held on the first sunday of the month, from 1:00 PM to approx. 4:00 PM.

The meetings take place at the Boos Recreation Center, Loomis Park, 210 Gilbert St., Jackson Mi.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER
by Wolfgang Mueller

Well, I would like to welcome our membership to the Mid Michigan Atari Magazine. I hope that you will appreciate this newsletter as much as I do.

Please remember that nominations will be taken for officers at the October meeting, and elections at the November meeting. Lets see a good turn out at these meetings in order to ensure a well rounded vote in the up coming elections.

I would also like to see if anyone is interested in programming classes, both basic and assembly. With the approach of winter, I would like to get something started.

TREASURER'S REPORT
by Scott Boland

As of September 26, 1986 the C.A.C.E. treasury contained $50.00 in petty cash and $259.06 in the bank account. I would like to remind all the members that club dues start to expire this November. Please try to pay your dues on the month prior to the expiration date. We will send out one newsletter after your dues expire, so don't miss out on this fantastic newsletter by letting your dues expire. Thank you, Scott Boland.

On the subject of the newsletter, we have decided to join the Mid Michigan Atari Magazine. The cost to the club will be $0.50 per member per month. I hope everybody likes this change as we not only get our own club news, but we also receive news and articles from other Atari clubs around Michigan. The clubs that are currently participating are C.H.A.O.S., C.A.C.E., and Genesse Atari Computer Enthusiasts. I understand that the clubs in Saginaw, Grand Rapids, and Battle Creek are thinking of joining. This is the best Atari newsletter I have ever seen.

As of this writing I still don't have confirmation on the location of the computer fair we planned on holding in November. I hope to have all the information for the October meeting, so everybody try to be there so we can make this a huge success.

Disk Library

C.A.C.E. Software Library

Just a note to the membership that we are in the process of exchanging library disks with C.H.A.O.S. . This should generate more activity for our library. In the future, look for some great new programs in the library. By the way, the position of club librarian has been turned over to Bob Kingsbury. We thank Joe Garner for the time and effort that he put into the library.

Telecom

CACE BBS

The CACE BBS, which is not affiliated in any way with the C.A.C.E. club, is off-line because of software problems. Tim Porter, the sysop, said he hoped the board will be back up in about a month.

Review

TOUCHDOWN FOOTBALL By:Electronic Arts
Reviewed By:Steve Godun
(excerpted from ZMAGAZINE 9/86)

Touchdown Football (TF) is a very well programmed game of football. Many hours must have gone into this program, and its graphics and detail in the game are excellent. However, there are two reasons why I feel that this game is destined for failure: (A) Computer football was never very popular to begin with, and (B) Some vengeful Atari owners might not buy this program to "get back" at EA. for abandoning ATARI for so long.

In this version of football, you can play head-to-head with another human, play solo against the computer, or just relax and watch two computer-controlled teams battle it out on the monitor. It looks just as if you were watching a real game on TV. Where's the beer and pretzels?

This game looks like a total rewrite of Gamestar's Starbowl Football. In fact, if Gamestar had programmed it, my bet is it would be called "Super Starbowl Football" instead! But instead of a flat, two-dimensional, two-color playfield, you have a 3-D, multi-color full scrolling gridiron. The "men" on each team are made up of about 3 colors, and they even move like little men. The scrolling field is well done, but a little jerky. EA obviously sacrificed smooth scrolling to give us multi- colored players.

The game begins with a coin toss (of which you have no control of the outcome), and then the kickoff. You play the home team in blue uniforms, and the computer (or player 2) plays the visitor team in red uniforms. The most unique feature of this game is the ability to actually MISS a kick or a pass. In Starbowl, the kickoff would automatically be caught, as would the passes from the quarterback.

During game play, you have your choice of just about every play in the book - Offensive and Defensive. You can punt, blitz, pass, block a kick, handoff, lateral passes, and interceptions are all available to you - and more. The computer can even be tricked by moving your man in the approprite direction.

The documentation that comes with the disk is neat and well organized for most people. However, my copy of the documentation had no true description of each play. I have no idea what some of the plays are (I'm not a football nut). Maybe some of the pages got lost somewhere, or maybe EA just didn't put it into the manual. If you're not a football fan and can't follow a play, you will have some trouble in finding out what each play does. If you're a Monday Night Footbal fan, you'll get a real charge out of this one.

Overall, I recommend this game to any true football and computer lover. TF does an excellent job of simulating a football game, but I found it a little too complex for me. If you're looking for a simple game to pass (Get it?) the time away, you might want to get hold of a simpler program such as Starbowl Football or even Atari Football. If you're looking for a football game that you can really sink your teeth into, this is it.

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GENESEE ATARI GROUP

serving the Flint area ATARI users

the GAG crew:

Jim Steele President
Gil Merciez VP(16) and ST librarian
Matt Howe VP(8) and Print librarian
Jerry Cross 8 bit disk librarian
Jim Tuma 8 bit disk librarian

Genesee Atari Group c/o Jim Steele 4711 Drummond Square, Flint, MI 48504

Next Meetings
October 8, '86 6:30pm <elections>
October 25 '86 9:30am <Saturday session>
November 12 '86 6:30pm <Swap meet>
November 22 '86 9:30am <Saturday session>
December 10 '86 6:30pm
<no December Saturday session scheduled>

Genesee Atari Group meets on the second Wednesday of the month at the Neithercut School, 2010 Crestbrook Dr. in Flint. Meetings start at 6:30. We also have a 9:30 am bull session on the fourth Saturday of most months during the school year. Come on out and say hello!
Membership is $10 per year. If paying by check, it should be payable to Jim Steele.

Presidential mumblings for October.
by Jim Steele

Welcome back to more insanity from GAG's fearless leader. This month the hot news is Atari has announced that it's going public with a stock offering. The press release I saw was just an announcement of their filing "intent" papers with the securities and exchange commision, but it's a good sign for the future. I guess they need some investment capital to get the "TT" off the ground,eh?

Back from the world of high finance, October is officer election month. I suppose that it will be an "officer drafted" month instead. Feel free to run against any of us on the masthead. A little new blood never hurts. As of this writing I personally am not sure if I can run again. I finally made the big plunge to that <other> 68000 system. I don't plan on putting my 800xl in the closet, it still does useful work for me. Oh well, decisions, decisions.

In other news, keep your wallets handy for the November meeting. We're having our biannual swap meet. Come on out and buy or sell just in time for Christmas... (already?) In October, after the elections I will show Accolade's "Hard Ball" a baseball simulator for the 8-bitters (If I can improve my embarassing score!) If there's anything else you people want to see, be sure to let us know!

One last thing, and I'm sure you have heard it too often, "This is your newsletter" Let's get some of you out there writing! Share your thoughts with the friendly folk in Lansing, Jackson, and maybe even the Huron valley. One more last thing about the newsletter. This publication is partly funded by advertising. If you can, drop in to our advertisers and "say you saw it in the Mid Michigan Atari Magazine".

til next time, -Jim

Disk Library

GAG Library Offerings...
by Jerry Cross

Let's get some business out of the way. First, I tried to put it off as long as I could. But it's time to face the music. Because of a dip in sales, and the future plans of the club, I will be raising the price of GAG disks to $2.50 starting in October. Part of the money will be used to repair the Indus drive the club purchased for copying library disks. It's acting a bit funky and needs some attention.

We are also planning some things for the coming year such as software purchases, and maybe even a hardware library. We already have a 1030 modem that members can borrow to see what it's like to communicate over the phone lines. I would like to see this continue.

Also, there will be an Atari convention in Detroit next year, and we could use a few dollars to set up a booth. But that's still a long ways away.

But it's not all that bad. I plan to put out some bonus disks, and maybe an occasional 2 for 1 month. Once we get a handle on the finances I'll get started on that.

Sy-Draft has now opened up a store in the Flint area. Since this is one of the places I have purchased blank disks, and since their price is hard to beat, I will not be selling blank disks any more. We started selling blank disks as a service to the members because we could get a better price buying in bulk. But since you can now buy disks for under 50 cents (I saw some recently for 10/$3.70!) there is no need to continue selling disks.

I am still working on an updated catalog. Hopefully, you will have it by the time you read this. As of this writing, it is all ready for copying, but the xerox machine at work has been broken. It may be necessary to have it done by a printer. Anyway, I'm still working on it.

OK, on to the good stuff. With the large amount of trading with CHAOS and TAG (Tri-City Atari Group) I have tons of great material to put out. Printshop fans are in for another treat. GAG disks 139 and 140 contain more Printshop icons. And Disk 149 contains a nifty program called IconShop. This program uses either a joystick, koalapad, or mouse, to draw Printshop icons. It features many of the commands that are on the Koala software, such as mirror, fill, and textured colors, cut-n-paste, circles and squares. Also on that disk are some Printshop utilities like PSPIC3, which converts a Screen Magic file from Printshop format to Atari dos, and allows you to place icon pictures on it. Also on this disk is PSFCONV, which converts the pictures to Atari format. You can then use PSFLOAD to load these pictures into your basic programs. It uses CIO commands, and you may need to dig through your old Analog mags for issue #17 for instructions on this. This disk also contains a scrunched file containing even more Printshop icons. Once "unscrunched" you will have another disk, and it will be in Printshop format (no need to convert them with Shoptool). Most of these icons were drawn by GAG member Dave Pettitt.

This month seems to be Graphic and Music month. Disk 142 is full of Koala pics, and 143 has more AMS files. Something a bit different can be found on disk 144. This is a 2-sided disk containing 4 Parrot sound digitizer files. These files are very large, and really show off the sound from the Atari's. It play's a short music recording that was digitized using the Parrot hardware. This is one of those "it sounds nice but what else can it do" programs, but it's worth the money.

Disk 145 is full of great graphic demos. Check out the OIL demo on disk 148. This is a public relations demo from England showing how oil is drilled and processed. Very imformative, and great graphics! This disk also contains the GOSDOS program you may have heard about (Graphics Operating System). This is an early version of a joystick controlled dos, but has several bugs and doesn't seem to be complete. But it's interesting to look at.

For you MPP users, disk 142 contains a BBS program based on the popular "Forum" program. I haven't found a volunteer to test it out for bugs, so you are on your own. This program is written in basic, and comes complete with sample files.

For utilities, this month you will find RepairShop, a nifty program that can repair some basic programs that don't seem to load. I tried it out on a file and it loaded ok, but the file still had a bug. This program just repairs the file, it doesn't de-bug it. I also found a disk index program that supports all densities, and holds up to 1000 records. It has a very fast sort routing, and many other features. Also, there is another word processing program called TED (Text EDitor). This program has limited features, but does have some interesting points. First, you can use inverse and graphic characters. It uses the standard Atari editing keyes, and will support "Insert" mode. The screen will scroll from left to right to give the impression of a 130 character line! This may come in handy for spreadsheets or plain 80 column printing.

In the games department, we have a couple programs that were written by GAG member Ed Kalush (he also did the new cover screen for the disks). Your librarian overlooked these programs for 3 months before uncovering them. Sorry about that. I won't talk about the Koala disk I lost two times. Nicole Hobb's Koala pics will be out next month for sure! Sorry, but Mrs. Hanners private collection will remain "private" (inside joke if you attended the last meeting).

Whew, that's a lot of disks! I'm sure there is something in this mess you can use. See you next month.

GAG DISK CATALOG
OCTOBER
==========

DISK # 139 FULL DISK OF PRINTSHOP ICONS

DISK # 140 FULL DISK OF PRINTSHOP ICONS

DISK # 141 FOREM MPP BBS PROGRAM

DISK # 142 FULL DISK OF KOALA PICTURES

DISK # 143 FULL DISK OF AMS MUSIC FILES

DISK # 144 FULL DISK (2 SIDES) OF PARROT SOUND DIGITIZED MUSIC FILES.

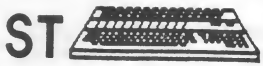
DISK # 145 GRAPHIC DEMOS
-RATOWN, DONG, SEASCENE ARE BINARY LOADED DLI PICTURES.
-FIRE DISPLAYS A FIRPLACE DEMO.
-MUSTGON, MATHART1,2 SHOW GRAPHIC PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES.
-STRETCH WILL DISTORT YOUR PICTURE FILES (ANTIC)
-COKE, ADEMO, RUNBOY ARE GREAT GRAPHIC DEMOS.
-SIDWIND DEMO'S HOW TO GET SCROLLING MESSAGES.

DISK # 146 GAMES
-FOOTBALL IS A TEXT FOOTBALL GAME. PLAY 1 OR 2 PLAYERS.
-BLCKJACK IS AN IMPROVED CARD GAME
-BUNK (DICE GAME) AND FOUR (SCORE FOUR) WRITTEN BY GAG MEMBER ED KALUSH.
-SCULL IS A "TAG" TYPE GAME. NEED A JOYSTICK.
-CRYATAL IS A SPACE ARCADE GAME.

DISK # 147 UTILITIES
-REPAIRST FIXES BAD BASIC FILES
-SYNCOPY IS A DISK COPY PROGRAM
-BFLAS BINARY FILE UTILITY
-COL80 IS AN 80 COLUMN HANDLER
-TED IS A LIMITED FEATURE WORD PROCESSOR. GIVE IT A TRY!
-INDEX IS A DISK CATALOG PROGRAM THAT WORKS ON ALL DENSITIES.
-BOOKEEPR IS A HOME BOOK KEEPING PROGRAM.
-MULTIFORM FORMATS MULTIPLE DRIVES.

DISK # 148 GOS DOS
-GRAPHIC OPERATING SYSTEM
-OIL, A GREAT GRAPHIC DEMO AND A LOOK AT OIL PRODUCTION.

DISK # 149 ICONSHOP
-CREATE PRINTSHIP ICONS USING THIS KOALA TYPE SOFTWARE. LOTS OF FEATURES.
-PSLOAD AND PSCONV WILL TRANSFORM PRINTSHOP SCREEN MAGIC FILES TO ATARI DOS TO USE IN YOUR BASIC PROGRAMS.
-PSPIC TRANSFORMS PRINTSHOP SCREEN MAGIC FILES TO ATARI DOS AND OVERLAYS ICONS ON THE PICTURE.
-PSPICS IS A SCRUNCH DISK CONTAINING MORE PRINTSHOP PICTURES WRITTEN BY GAG MEMBER DAVE PETTIT.



ST NEWS FOR FLINT

Sorry I had to miss the September regular meeting. While the tornado sirens were blaring, I was visiting my daughters' teachers at a school open house. We will just have to make up for it in October.

A funny thing thing happened as I was writing this month's articles. I totally blew up a disk directory. Destroyed beyond recognition, it showed my disk contained 121 files of 11 bytes each dated 1/11/80 all named with the symbol of a musical note.

Unfortunately, I had just finished and saved the ST Corner column on that disk. Don't panic! The words of Douglas Adams rang in my head as I sat scratching my balding head trying to figure out what went wrong. At last I discovered the problem. The infamous loose chip syndrome had reared its ugly head just as I was saving my file.

Thanks to sector editors, disk doctors, and disk utilities I was able to find the sectors which contained the article and salvage the file. It did give me some anxious moments, however, and the reconstructive surgery took forever.

THINKING ABOUT OCTOBER

It's only the middle of September and I haven't even started to think about what might be in store for GAG ST owners for the October meeting. If you showed up for the Saturday session, we will have talked about it and then you'll know more than I do at this point. If that sounds confusing, that's because it is!

What I really need is a volunteer to help me better coordinate the ST happenings. My time, especially in the fall, is limited. Any volunteers?

I've just heard from Jerry Cross that Sy Draft is opening a store in Flint on Corunna Road near Linden. For those who are familiar with Sy Draft's other store in Southfield, you'll know that he stocks a wide variety of ST software at prices that rival mail order

houses. It's just what we need in the Flint area.

LIBRARY NOTES

October's meeting will see at least three new disks added to the ST library. One disk will be packed with pictures in Tiny format. Many of these pictures were winners in Antic's contest and are really worth having. Another disk will contain a new version of ST Writer version 1.07. This version fixes most of the bugs in the original release and includes rewritten documentation that is much better than the original.

There is also a version 1.50 (not to be confused with version 1.5 which has a few reported bugs) floating around which goes even further. If I can locate it, it will be on the same disk. Also on the ST Writer disk is a nifty little print spooler program that reserves 33K of memory to buffer the much slower printer. Print spoolers can save you a lot of time if you do a lot of printing, especially when dumping graphics.

A third disk will contain a mixture of demos, utilities, and other interesting tidbits. I have a playable chess demo from a program that will be released in November. It plays incredibly stupid chess but will give you a good idea of what the released version will look like. Also included on this disk is a working demo of Solapak, which is a combination print spooler, ram disk, and screen capture accessory that takes an incredibly small amount of memory due to it's optimized assembly language. There is a GEM version of the ubiquitous Life program as well as a Checkers game written in Personal Pascal. It should be an interesting disk.

This disk was also going to contain the 0.9 version of NEO. It seems that someone uploaded this greatly expanded version of NEO to Genie and Delphi a few weeks back. There was some initial confusion about whether it was meant to be placed in the public domain. Finally Atari decided that it was never meant to be released and requested that it be removed from the download sections. In good conscience I can't really put it on a library disk and should probably destroy my copy. Atari feels that releasing this version will hurt the sales of the final version which will be a commercial product.

I can say that NEO is looking better and better. There have been many added features since the .5 version shipped with all ST's. Circles, squares and other shapes can now be drawn with ease. A grid feature makes it much easier to line up objects. X-Y coordinates of the drawing pen can be toggled on and off. Portions of pictures can be saved in source format for later inclusion in your own programs. The final release of NEO should be quite good.

That's it for this month. Hope to see you at the October meeting and don't forget the Saturday workshops on the fourth Saturday of the month. All meetings are at Neithercutt school. If you have any comments or suggestions you can leave me a message on FACTS (313-736-3920). Jerry should have his hard drive fixed by the time you read this.

ST Review

THE WRITTEN WORD
By: Gil Merciez

The Mid Michigan Atari Magazine isn't the only new magazine to hit the streets in the past few months. STart's second issue follows closely on the heels of the premier edition of Compute's Atari ST.

STart's first issue in June met some mixed reviews. It certainly lived up to its initial claims of being geared toward the professional programmers. It contained some heavy duty articles with a major emphasis on C programming techniques that were probably over the heads of the vast majority of ST owners.

Personally, although I didn't understand most of the programming nitty gritty, I found the first issue of STart to be just what the ST world needs. It contained little fluff and lots of solid information. My only complaint is the somewhat stiff $14.95 price tag which includes the program disk. A subscription for this quarterly costs $59.95 but also includes a free year of ANTIC ($28) to buffer the steep cost. B. Dalton's carries the magazine without the disk for $4. STart will be available this way in limited quantities for the forseeable future.

The second issue is substantially larger than the first and continues in its high powered user style although I did notice just a tad of softening around the edges. There is an excellent comparison article of the five major

C compilers as well as another comparison of 7 word processors for the ST with a chart showing how they stack up in 90 different features. The enclosed disk is chocked full of programming examples, source code, a few applications and demos, Xlisp 1.5, and a Reversi desk accessory. STart looks like it will become MUST reading for serious ST owners.

Compute's Atari ST debuted with a much lighter style. Weighing in at a somewhat meager 80 pages, this $12.95 bimonthly magazine and disk combo will probably appeal to a wider audience. There seemed to be a major emphasis on ST news, gossip and rumors, reviews, and lighter type features. It follows closely the format of Compute magazine.

Compute's Atari ST is not available without the disk. The first issue's disk was barely half full, padded with a text file of Atari User Groups. Astro Panic!, a mildly interesting arcade game written in C, is the highlight of the disk. The magazines's annotated program listing of Astro Panic! which is heavily interspersed with comments and explanations will prove useful to those who like to study code.

I also enjoyed Compute's Atari ST and am anxious to see how it evolves with each succeeding issue. Just be thankful you don't live in Canada and have to pay $17.95 for it.

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PIRATE PATROL

THE HUNT CONTINUES...
(excerpted from ZMAGAZINE 9/86)

In Los Angeles on September 4th, a former University of Southern California student was sentenced to two years in prison following conviction on charges that he illegally gained access to the school's computer three times to change his grades. The man, 28-year-old Mehrdad Amini of Beverly Hills, was alleged to be a leader of a grade-tampering ring involving as many as 43 students at USC. According to The Associated Press, Amini had faced up to four years and four months in prison.

In Baltimore, police have seized two computer systems they say were used by computer intruders to locate and sell private long-distance telephone codes of customers of MCI Telecommunications Inc. Investigators were able to trace the alleged computer crackers with new anti-fraud software installed in MCI's switching system.

Police seized computers, printers, modems, records and intrusion programs. "They probably have hundreds of people who tap into their system," said police, so the investigation "will be an ongoing thing until people get the message."

Long-distance telephone fraud has cost the industry more than $500 million annually.

Authorities are blaming computer crackers for running up a $107,000 telephone tab for Jessica Barnett of Orlando, Fla., during the last three months.

According to UPI, the 28-year-old housewife contacted MCI Telecommunications Corp. in Atlanta shortly after opening the 400-page, two-inch thick bill.

Mrs. Barnett said she thought things were straightened out when she did not get a bill last month. However, the bill that arrived Monday included $70,000 in past-due charges. MCI told the Barnetts to, uh, ignore the bill.

Review

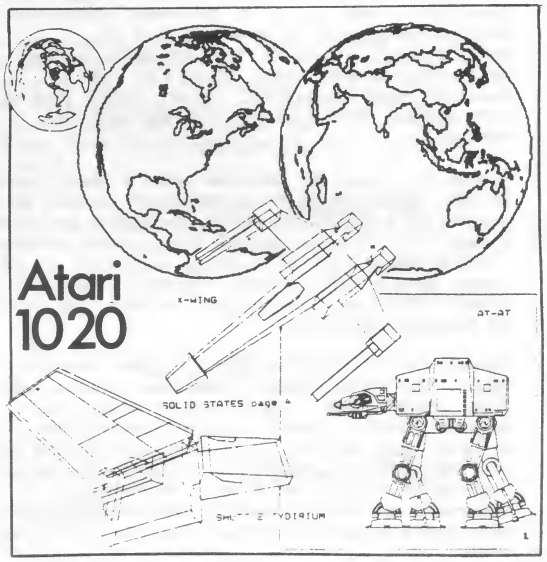
ATARI 1020 PRINTER/PLOTTER
Reviewed by John Nagy

The mighty midget printer, the ATARI 1020, was built to sell for around $150 and can be bought mail order today for about $30. That fact alone should be a motivator for most of us knee-jerk bargain hunters. But there are even better reasons to jump at this deal- the printer is amazing!

Imagine being able to plot out 3-D cad-type pictures in four colors, any scale, any rotation... then add lettering in ANY SIZE you specify, even ROTATING the print sideways or upside down. Perfect for charts, graphs, or just doodling. Outstanding for KOALA pic dumps in full color. And able to handle 80-column printing too!

Sure, the 4.5" roll paper is small, and in 80 columns, the print is TEENY-TINY, but the detail and control is PERFECT. Sure, the thing is SLOW (don't plan to list a 48K program to it twice in the same evening), but ANY printer for $30 (especially one that plugs in without an interface, just like a disk drive) is incredable.

CHAOS has used one for over 2 years on the BBS as the system logger. It plows out about 3-4 feet of paper every day, every month, and never missed a word until I forced some of the wrong paper into it (clever move, eh?). Even then, the reapir was easy... but for $30, we can afford to have a spare!



ART FROM BATTLE CREEK ATARI GROUP

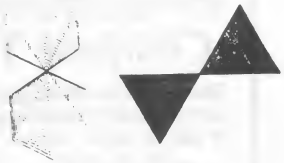
Get one of these mighty mites while they last- even if you have a top of the line printer, this one will do things you never thought of. Perfect for a hard-copy lister on your second system, or, if you have NO other printer, far better than NOTHING ever could be.

C.H.A.O.S. 1020 Plotter Disk
Summarized by Sally Nagy

C.H.A.O.S. Utility Disk C16 contains many utilites and demos for the remarkable little ATARI 1020 printer/plotter. Here's a quick look at some of the best on the disk:

KOALAPLT lets you print Koala Tablet or Graphics 8 pic files on your 1020. Once the picture is loaded, push the select key and a small color menu appears where you can change the colors of your picture. Once satisfied with the color push Start. Pictures with a lot of detail can take as long as an hour to plot.

KOALAPLT



TRIGART

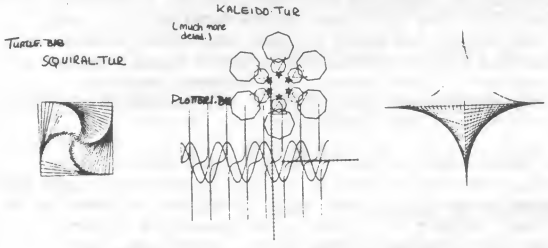
TRIGART gives you numerous patterns which are plotted. When promted by the program, input 4 numbers and wait for the new creation to appear. This is a one color plot.

The programs DRAW1020, SHOW1020 and TAPERUN.SYS are used together to use the Joystick to draw pictures that you can plot or view with SHOW1020. The file called SKETPAD.DOC explains these programs in more detail.

DIR1020 prints a 4 column super-mini directory listing of any Dos Disk.

PSF1020 prints a 4 column listing of Print Shop Graphics Disks.

EZ1020 helps you gain more control of your plotter. You are able to choose between graphics and write modes. You can pen colors, create different size print, rotate text, and many other functions from easy menus.



TURTLE.BAS, TURTLE.DOC, SQUIRAL.TUR(1 COLOR PLOT), KALEIDO.TUR(4 COLOR PLOT). Turtle 1020 is an interpreted language written in Atari Basic. The interpreter is a mixture of Pilot, Logo and Basic Commands. Read TURTLE.DOC for how to use these programs.

PLOT1020.DOC is a tutorial on mastering the 1020 plotter. It gives a summary of text and graphics commands.

PLOTTER1.BAS DEMO shows how the functions of SIN, COS and TAN look when plotted.

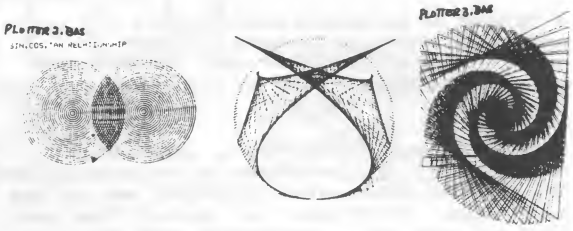
PLOTTER2.BAS DEMO draws two groups of concentric circles which cross each other.

PLOTTER3.BAS DEMO draws spiraling triangles.

PLOTTER4.BAS DEMO draws two squares and connects each of the corners with a line.

PLOT1.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT, MORE DESIGNS)

PLOT2.BAS(4 COLOR GRAPH)



PLOT3.BAS(1 COLOR PLOT, DIAMOND CUT IN TWO)

PLOT4.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT)

XYAXIS(GRAPH AXIS)

POSTRMRK.DOC, POSTRMK makes a cut and paste Koala Pic, 8 X 11, 3 strips. This takes about 1 hour to plot the picture of one color.

Also included:
SAMPLE.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT)
RANDOM.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT, plus OPTIONS)
TRIANGLE.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT)
TRIANG2.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT)
GRAPH.BAS(1 COLOR PLOT)
COLOR.BAS(4 COLOR PLOT).

These files are found on C.H.A.O.S. Utility Disk C16.

Atari Technical

HINTS FOR ALL ATARI USERS
Collected by John Nagy

ATARI is acknowleging their console button problems on the XE series. A technical bulletin released July 25 says, essentially, to replace R95 (a 220 Ohm resistor on the main circuit board) with a 1K Ohm, 5% resistor, as well as a piece of tape as a shim under the console key area of the flex cicuit inside the keyboard and careful cleaning inside the keyboard. This is reported to work, but not as reliably as the circuit printed in the CHAOS newsletter a few months back. That revision adds three 3K Ohm resistors to the back of the circuit board, one each from the ground connection (pin 3 of the keyboard connector as seen from the top) to pins 21, 22, and 23 of the keyboard connector.

Opening the keyboard on your XE series ATARI can aggravate another common problem: a set of keys other than the console keys fails. This is due to a broken trace on the flex circuit inside the keyboard itself. The fix is to find the break, clean the area carefully, then apply

a "bridge" of conductive paint to make the repair. A bottle of Commonly available automotive REAR DEFROSTER WIRE REPAIR is perfect. Be neat, and let it dry before reassembly.

ATARIWRITER BLUES: Many early copies of ATARIWRITER PLUS have defective dictionaries. Try to check words after "BLOOMERS" and you get error flags. ATARI says just contact them, and they will send you a replacement disk, no return or proof of purchase required.

Some of us are slightly horrified to discover ATARIWRITER PLUS operates from a built-in version of DOS 2.5. That means it FORMATS a 1050 into the alien "DENSITY AND-A- HALF", and CANNOT be used in true double density! Yuk. Well, you can get out of this mess by replacing the DOS on your ATARIWRITER PLUS disk. Yes, even though it is copyprotected and will not show you a directory (from itself), there is a normal set of DOS, DUP, etc.files on the disk! If it is a little scary to do it to your original copy, find someone who can back it up on some modified drive, then write your favorite DOS right to the ATARIWRITER PLUS disk. Don't worry when it gives you a "bad sector" error when it tries to write the DUP.SYS file, as it part of the copyprotection system, and DUP is unused by the ATARIWRITER PLUS program anyway. I used SMARTDOS, and presto, I have a true double density and auto-density changing ATARIWRITER PLUS... with no "1050" density nonsense! This works on BOTH the regular and 130XE versions. (NOTE: if the DOS you install does not support "AUTORUN.SYS" files, be sure to rename the AUTORUN on the ATARIWRITER PLUS disk to whatever name it must be to autoboot under your chosen DOS!)

ATARIWRITER has an undocumented ability to handle a modem! Provided a handler was booted in as an AUTORUN.SYS, you can SAVE to or LOAD from the modem by using "R: FILE" for the filename. Both ends of this transfer should be using ATARIWRITER and modems. The sender would SAVE, while the reciever would LOAD.

More ATARIWRITER+ problems! Although the manual is very specific about the NEED for every file to END with a RETURN, you probably still forget sometimes (I do!). What happens next? When you try to print the file, you get a mysterious "FILE LENGTH ERROR" at the bottom of the screen instead of printing. Just go add a RETURN and try again!

Some ATARI ST owners have found that they have printer problems. The computer thinks that the printer has printed, but the printer acts like nothing ever happened. Not a way to get much done! It seems the problem is that some printers present a load of such a type as to prevent the ST output from getting through. The printer port on the ST is driven by the SOUND CHIP (HUH?) and it appears that such a printer can even damage the chip after some time. The solution if you have this situation is to put a buffer in line with your printer. It costs a bit, but it works. The ST is fine feeding the printer buffer, and the buffer output matches the printer fine. We hope ATARI has corrected this in production by now.

An Undocumented use for the right mouse button on your ST is manipulate files in a non-active (background) window. You DO NOT need to click on the window! Just hold the RIGHT button down while clicking the LEFT as though the window WAS active WITHOUT reselecting windows.

Ever go blind trying to read your 8-bit screen during a long print or computation that allows the "attract" mode to begin? After about 7 minutes without a keystroke, the ATARI starts shifting colors and densities on the screen to prevent a "burn in" of the screen phosphors. If you need to see what's on the screen but are afraid to press a key for fear of upsetting the program, try pressing SHIFT/CONTROL/A. This combination is seen by the operating system as "a key was pressed, but I don't have any data from it". This brings the screen back to normal with no danger of a key command bouncing around in your procedure.

A quick way to get data or text into a disk file from DOS without a word processor uses the COPY function. Just copy from the screen to a file! Select "C", then when prompted "FROM, TO" type "E:,D:FILENAME.EXT". When you hit RETURN, your screen will blank. Begin to type, and use any and all normal editing functions, as well as returns. When you have a screen full of what you want, press CONTROL/3. This indicated an END-OF-FILE, and the screen (E:=EDITOR) is copied to the filename you gave. Note: ONLY that which is ON THE SCREEN will be in the file. If you scrolled off a few lines, they are GONE. You can also copy a screen to the printer (P:) or the modem (R:, provided a handler has been booted)!

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Programs

LOVE AT FIRST BYTE
By: Mathew S. Howe

Hello, my name as you can see is Mathew S. Howe and I am the vice-president of the 8 bit Atari sig for the Genesee Atari Group. I also write a monthly newsletter article (well at least I try to write one each month).

My articles are on advanced programming in BASIC. Several months ago I started a series of articles on programming player missile (P/M) graphics.

This month we are going to continue in the same series. But if you haven't seen the other articles don't just turn the page and read something else. There is hope. First if you know something about P/M graphics then you are here at the right time. If you would like to read the beginning of this series all the articles in the series are available on my BBS.

Love At First Byte is the name of my BBS and the number is 1-313-233-4226. It is 300/1200 baud and up 24 hours a day. The articles are in the databases (R command). Before we get into this months mysteries I would like to add that if you have questions about Atari computers or basic programming in general leave me a message on the BBS and I'll get you an answer as soon as possible (usually less than 24 hours). The more interesting questions become future articles to help other programmers.

As I mentioned earlier we are going to get into some of the more advanced features of P/M graphics. One of the things we are going to look at is the priority register the other thing we are going to explore is collisions. So lets get right into it.

Regular readers should have a copy of this saved on a disk (or tape) if you do not have it please type it in now.

```
10 REM SAVE "D:DEMO.BAS
20 GRAPHICS 7+16:A=PEEK(106)-24:POKE
106,A
30 POKE 54279,A:A=A*256
40 POKE 559,46:POKE 53277,3:POKE
53256,1
50 POKE 53248,50:X=50
60 FOR Q=A+512 TO A+640:POKE Q,0:NEXT
Q
70 POKE 704,216:READ B
80 FOR Q=A+542 TO A+549:READ B:POKE
Q,B:NEXT Q:Y=30
85 GOSUB 5000:GOSUB 9000:IMG=IMG1
90 OLDY=Y:OLDX=X:ST=STICK(0):IF ST=15
THEN 90
91 IF ST=10 OR ST=14 OR ST=6 THEN IF
OLDY>11 THEN Y=OLDY-1
92 IF ST=9 OR ST=13 OR ST=5 THEN IF
OLDY<99 THEN Y=OLDY+1
93 IF ST=9 OR ST=10 OR ST=11 THEN IF
OLDX>41 THEN X=OLDX-1
94 IF ST=5 OR ST=6 OR ST=7 THEN IF
OLDX<200 THEN X=OLDX+1
100 POKE 53248,X
110 IF X<OLDX THEN IMG=IMG1
120 IF X>OLDX THEN IMG=IMG2
210 B=USR(VP,IMG,A+512+OLDY,A+512+Y)
250 GOTO 90
1000 DATA 8,255,24,61,63,60,24,60,0
1010 DATA 8,255,24,188,252,60,24,60,0
5000 REM VIEW OF THE CITY
5020 SETCOLOR 0,0,14:SETCOLOR 1,8,4
5030 SETCOLOR 2,0,0:SETCOLOR 4,8,8
5040 COLOR 1:PLOT 159,95:DRAWTO
159,90:DRAWTO 0,90:POSITION
0,95:GOSUB 5170
5050 COLOR 2:PLOT 159,89:DRAWTO
159,40:DRAWTO 139,40:POSITION
139,89:GOSUB 5150
5060 PLOT 107,89:DRAWTO 107,35:DRAWTO
87,35:POSITION 87,89:GOSUB 5150
5070 PLOT 55,89:DRAWTO 55,75:DRAWTO
0,75:POSITION 0,89:GOSUB 5150
5080 COLOR 3:PLOT 127,89:DRAWTO
127,40:DRAWTO 108,40:POSITION
108,89:GOSUB 5160
5090 PLOT 75,89:DRAWTO 75,25:DRAWTO
50,25:POSITION 50,74:GOSUB 5160
5100 PLOT 75,74:DRAWTO 56,74:POSITION
56,89:GOSUB 5160
5110 PLOT 20,74:DRAWTO 20,55:DRAWTO
0,55:POSITION 0,74:GOSUB 5160
5120 COLOR 1:PLOT 140,30:DRAWTO
140,10:DRAWTO 90,10:POSITION
90,30:GOSUB 5170
5130 PLOT 60,20:DRAWTO 60,8:DRAWTO
15,8:POSITION 15,20:GOSUB 5170
5140 RETURN
5150 POKE 765,2:XIO 18,#6,0,0,"S:":RETURN
5160 POKE 765,3:XIO 18,#6,0,0,"S:":RETURN
5170 POKE 765,1:XIO 18,#6,0,0,"S:":RETURN
9000 LET VP=1536:REM VER POS ROUTINE
9005 RESTORE 9050
9010 FOR Q=0 TO 43
9020 READ D
9030 POKE VP+Q,D
9040 NEXT Q
9050 DATA 104,162,5,104,149,220,202,16,250,198,
20,198,222,160,0,177,224,170
9060 DATA 168,165,223,240,9,169,0,145,222,136,2
8,249,138,168,165,221,240,7,177,224,1
5,220,136,208,249,96
9070 REM USR(VP,IMG1,OLD LOC,NEW LOC)
9080 IMG1=VP+46:IMG2=IMG1+9
9090 RESTORE 1000:FOR Q=VP+46 TO VP+46+17
```

```
9100 READ D:POKE Q,D
9110 NEXT Q
10000 RETURN
```

Please save this file to disk for future use. Ok now that we have that done we are ready to add this months changes. Retype the following lines:

```
70 POKE 704,220:READ B:POKE 623,8
90 OLDY=Y:OLDX=X:ST=STICK(0)
95 IF B THEN X=OLDX
96 IF Y<99 THEN SOUND 2,200,2,4
220 C=PEEK(53252):IF C/2<>INT(C/2) THEN SOUND
0,100,6,6:B=1
230 IF C/2=INT(C/2) THEN SOUND 0,0,0,0:B=0
240 POKE 53278,255:SOUND 2,0,0,0
```

Also delete lines 5120 and 5130. You now have the program for this month's discussion. You may also save this file to disk. Remember to use a different name.

First let's talk about what we mean by priorities. A couple of months ago we drew a view of the city and we called the different colors playfields. Well in P/M graphics when we talk about priorities we mean which item will be displayed when a player overlaps a playfield. The default condition is players have priority over all playfields. Last month we saw this as the helicopter moving over the city and it never went behind a building. Ok that was neat but we want to fly our chopper between the buildings just like in real life. Well that is where priorities come in. We can set our priorities so that some will cover the player while some appear behind the player. There are two locations that control priority. One is 53275 the other is 623. Now 53275 is the location of the register in the ANTIC chip that actually controls the P/M graphics and is reset by the system on a regular basis so Atari provided a "shadow register". The shadow register is used by the operating system to reload the ANTIC chip after a reset, The shadow register is location 623. There are several things controlled by this location but right for now we are going to concern ourselves with just the basic priorities we have been discussing. So in priorities there are just 4 different cases and they are:

PRIORITY	VALUE
ALL THE PLAYERS THEN ALL THE PLAYFIELDS	1
PLAYERS 0 AND 1 THEN THE PLAYFIELDS THEN PLAYERS 2 AND 3	2
ALL THE PLAYFIELDS THEN ALL THE PLAYERS	4
PLAYFIELDS 0 AND 1 THEN ALL THE PLAYERS THEN PLAYFIELDS 2 AND 3	8

I chose the last case for a value of 8. I chose 8 because it would allow us to fly behind 0 and 1 and in front of 2 and 3. As you may remember 0 is the clouds and ground, 1 is the lighter buildings, 2 is the darker buildings. I have not mentioned the background yet because it always has the last priority, meaning that everything shows over the background. After all isn't that why they call it the background? In line 70 we add a poke 623,8 this sets the priorities. Try it it works real well. Simple too! Line 96 starts a chopper sound if we are above the ground and the second half of line 240 finishes the sound. We will talk more about sound in a future article so if you do not understand the sound statement don't worry about it.

The next thing we add this month is a little more involved. There are several collision registers each detecting a different type of collision. What we are interested in are collisions between player 0 and the playfields. They are stored in a register at 53252. In all the player to playfield collision registers the value returned is a sum of the playfields you have overlapped. One of the clues here is "overlapped". collisions are only detected if you overlap the playfield. Below is a chart of the values returned when you peek a player playfield register:

PLAYFIELD HIT	VALUE
PLAYFIELD 0	1
PLAYFIELD 1	2
PLAYFIELD 2	4
PLAYFIELD 3	8

Remember I said that it held a sum of values so if we are half on playfield 0 and half on playfield 1 the value will be 3. I decided I wanted to know when we crashed (overlapped the ground). So I deleted the two lines that drew the clouds 5120 and 5130 and tested for collisions with playfield 0. We can see that all combinations of collisions except 0 give us a even number. Only playfield 0 gives an odd number so in lines 220 and 230 I do a C/2=INT(C/2) test to see if it is odd or even. if it is odd then I do a crash sound, if not, I do a stop sound. I also make B=1 if there is a collision and B=0 if no collision. I use B to decide if you can move sideways in line 95. The only other thing to remember on collisions is that the collisions registers will remember that collisions that have happened till reset. The way to clear ALL the collision registers is to poke 53278 with any number. So in line 240 we poke 53278,255. There is one last change that I put into the program and that is I took out the IF ST=15 THEN ... out of line 90. This makes sure that we look at the collision registers every time through the loop.

Well that about covers it for this month. I know we covered a lot of ground here and some of it pretty fast. But if you look at the listing I am sure you can figure out how it works, if not drop me a line and I'll show you more. Next month I am going to put some giant worms on the buildings and equip the chopper with a gun to shoot them. Till then...

Keep with the program.

Atari ST Rumours
by John J. Anderson
(excerpted from ZMAGAZINE 9/86)

Microsoft will provide Microsoft Write for the ST series. Write is based on the popular Microsoft Word, for the Macintosh. We are told that Microsoft Write will make full use of the powerful monochrome and color graphics capabilities of the ST.

Matthew Stern saw Write at the Southern California Atari FEST, and says: "It has almost all the features of the Macintosh version, including multiple documents, footnotes, page layout, and headers and footers. You can even highlight entire lines at a time, just like you can on the Mac version. It doesn't have split screens, and most importantly, does not (yet) support fonts and graphics." Atari plans to sell it for $125 to $150.

Also heard at the show was that Atari is wrapping up the official version of GDOS, the addition to GEM that supports high-resolution fonts and graphics. If you've used Easy Draw, you may already know how GDOS works. IT comes on a disk that adds fonts and graphics. The print quality is superb, even on a dot-matrix printer.

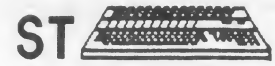
Have you had a chance to play with CAD-3D from Antic software? I have, and my problem now is finding a way to stop. The program, written by Tom Hudson (who wrote the magnificent Degas paint package), is a masterpiece in solid modeling *and* in ease of use. In about an hour, you can learn enough to experiment, create, and play for dozens of hours more.

CAD-3D provides powerful tools for creating three-dimensional objects -- and for viewing these objects from different angles, distances, and perspectives. You can view objects in wireframe (as if it was modeled out of pipecleaners); hidden line (hidden lines are removed); solid (objects are shaded, for a sculptured look); or outlined mode (a hidden line plot superimposed over a solid plot). In solid and outlined modes, you can control up to three "light sources," and create accurate, automatic shading.

The current program offers an animation module, but it necessarily slows in direct proportion to the complexity of the objects it depicts. A demo disk of an upgraded animation package-in-progress recently crossed my desk, and it is fantastic. It allows animation at up to ten frames per second, and packs an amazing amount of data onto a single disk.

The capper to all this is a forthcoming "stereo" option, allowing you to view objects in 3-D. Yes, it requires special glasses, but before you groan, realize that we are *not* talking about red-blue or even polarized glasses here. The package will utilize high-speed liquid crystal-shutter glasses, synched to the video scan of the ST monitor.

Rumor of the month: Our informed sources say there's a new computer coming from Atari in 1987, to be called the 2080 ST. If your first instinct tells you that the 2080 is an ST with twice the power of the 1040, you are probably right.



ST CORNER
By: Gil Merciez

A tentative and sheepish welcome to all the new readers of this long winded and overblown column. It will take some time to adjust to the new editorial deadlines. Where I come from we are used to a bit more immediacy. Using advanced telecommunication techniques and state of the art xeroxing methods, our old newsletter was generally in members' mailboxes before the print head of my trusty Gemini had cooled. Having to resort to professional printers using obsolete mechanical offset equipment necessitates about a 3-4 week lag not even considering the pony express speed of bulk mail. But that's the price you have to pay for a classy production.

SOME NOT SO ANCIENT HISTORY

Over the past year and a half I've been covering the ST world for the Genesee Atari Group. It was August 1985 when I relegated my battered 48K 400 to a minor corner of my desktop to make room for a shiny new 520 ST. By January the wheezing 8 bit was dispatched to a hidden corner of the closet and has not seen the light of day since.

It was quite a risk back in mid 1985 to commit to a new untested computer from a company near death's door. No software was available and the price was full retail. Pioneer ST owners remember eagerly snapping up some of the first commercial programs; Mudpies, the first in long string of releases from Pontiac based Michtron; Hex, a strategy game from Mark of the Unicorn; Express, a letter processor from the now bankrupt Mirage Concepts; and Chat 1.0, a buggy terminal program from SST Systems.

Very few of the early releases took advantage of the the GEM based features of the ST. Software development tools were poor and the learning curve for programmers was steeper than anticipated. I remember Tom Nelson of VIP Technologies telling me that during the development of VIP Professional, work came to a total standstill for over 3 weeks because the source code was too large to compile. They were stumped! Solid documentation for the operating system was non existent.

A squabble had erupted between Atari and Digital Research, the designers of the GEM interface and TOS, the ST's operating system. As a result Atari's own system programmers had to document a good deal of the operating system on their own, through trial and error, in attempting to fix the myriad of bugs in the early versions of TOS. The infamous Hitchhikers Guide to the BIOS, written internally at Atari, served as one of the most useful guides for outside developers.

In a rush to fill the software void many commercial releases were shipped with glaring and many times fatal bugs. First versions of VIP Professional were totally unusable. Habawriter had several fatal flaws. Most of Hippopotamus Software's early releases were sprinkled with obvious if not fatal bugs. Gradually, the software void began to fill. By mid year 1986 there were 200+ titles that had actually hit dealer shelves with more than twice that number close to completion. Just about every major category had been filled with at least a couple of entries. As the year draws to a close, ST owners are promised a flood of new releases to help relieve their bulging wallets of Christmas savings.

While the bugs have not disappeared (they probably never will), most products are now shipping relatively solid versions with bugs falling into the annoyance category.

Meanwhile, ST's have been quietly selling in a steady, if not spectacular, fashion. The user base has grown to a point where most publishers of home based software are now supporting the ST with much more than a few token releases. Many secondary IBM and MacIntosh software houses are also testing the ST market with serious business and specialized application packages. The Tramiel Atari Corp. is now claiming across the board profitabity for 1986 with all the dead wood from the old Warner years behind it. Research and development on the ST is continuing at a healthy pace with many enhancements in the works including the TT 32 bit series. The future of the ST seems secure. My gamble has paid off.

PHILOSOPHY

With that bit of history behind me, it's on to the task at hand. I no longer feel compelled to play the role of an ST booster blind to the inadaquacies of both software and hardware. There are too many products on the market to squander precious dollars on losers. Hopefully, some of my comments in this column will save you some frustration in your software purchases. I am not a programmer and don't intend to become one. I don't have the time. I am interested in all sorts of applications and entertainment packages.

I firmly believe in productivity software that is intuitively obvious in its use, does not require a large investment in time and talent to learn, yet does not sacrifice power and performance. I realize this is a tall order, but as a consumer this is what I demand.

Most of the powerful software on the market seems to be either written or documented for programmers, systems analysts, and other techie types. Programmers often forget or don't realize that the end user of their product does not have a degree in Computer Science. Documentation is most often written by a programmer or one who is so intimate with the software development that too much is taken for granted. A good piece of programming can be crippled by inadaquate instructions.

As far as entertainment packages go, I look for substance over flash. Dazzling graphics are but one small part of enjoyable game playing. If the game becomes tedious, impossibly difficult, or lacks depth then it will quickly end up on an out of the way shelf.

In a nutshell, I look for how much bang for the buck I get from my software purchases. After all, isnt't that why we all bought the ST? Power without the price? We paid the price now let's see if we can find that elusive power. End of philosophy.

WINDING DOWN

The list of "Real Soon Now" software is piling up rapidly prior to the Christmas selling season. Next month I'll take a look at some of the new releases that are cluttering my desk.

One new release I've just started to look at is Regent Base from Regent Software ($99). A

database program that seems to be more powerful than DB Master One but not as complex as DBMAN. I may have a better feel for Regent Base next month if I can find the time to play around with it.

I just wish some enterprising developer would find a way to code a program that suspends time. It would be a perfect addition to my Auto folder.

The Following Review is presented through the courtesy of Compuserve's DL7 Section:

ATARI PLANETARIUM REVIEW
By: Dick Brudzynski 76703,2011

New! From Atari! In the privacy of your own home, you can TRAVEL IN TIME! Unbelievable? Wait, there's more! You can WARP SPACE! That's right, travel to any point on the globe, explore distant planets and galaxies! Learn the SECRETS OF THE ANCIENTS! Share the thoughts of Aristotle, Ptolemy, and Thucydides. Navigate by the stars! Explore time and space! See the Star of Bethlehem and the Andromeda Galaxy! Make time run backwards! Stop the Sun and the Moon! Move the Earth on its axis! See through solid matter! Explore the mysteries of the Great Pyramid of Gizeh and the Stone Lion of Nimrud Dagh! Find your place in the wondrous miracle of the UNIVERSE itself! The price for all these powers -- a paltry $25.

The product -- Atari Planetarium!

The demo in my dealer's store was so impressive that I took home a new XE computer to run the software on. (It'll work on your XL as well--old 800 users will give serious consideration to upgrading when they see this product in action!) The Atari Planetarium turns your monitor into a window on a working model of the universe with more than 1200 stars, all 88 constellations, the eight planets, the sun and moon, and over 300 "deep sky" objects (other galaxies). You can enjoy the view from ANY spot on the planet at ANY time (day or night). That is ANY TIME--10,000 years into the future or 10,000 years into the past!

Using the Atari Planetarium is an impressive experience. When you boot up, you'll want to go to MAP mode and set your longitude and latitude by moving the cursor over a full screen world mercator map. Head for your home town, or Rome, or Pago-Pago, whatever sky interests you.

Now its time to go to SET mode to set the time on your local clock. The computer will handle all the complexities of converting for different time zones. Set the clock for tonight, tomorrow night, next century, or anytime within the previous or next ten milleniums. (I like to start off the evening by watching the sunset. The Atari Planetarium does an excellent job of moving from day through twilight to dark night. The folks who worked on this program understood the capabilities of the 8-bit Atari and used them well.)

Location and time set? OK, it's time to go to SKY mode and see what the skies will be like. You'll probably want to set the clock running so you can follow the path of the stars across the sky during the evening. Atari Planetarium will let you adjust the clock to run as fast as 64X real time if you want to observe the evening's events in a few minutes.

SKY mode offers a wonderful array of options. You can toggle: LINES to display the outlines of the major constellations; NAMES to display the names of the constellations; SYMBOLS to display the planets; DEEP SKY to display those 300 other galaxies; TRACK to have the Planetarium follow the sun, moon, and any planet or constellation across the sky for you; and, SOUND to change your crosshair cursor to a "space shuttle" which will rocket across the sky with the appropriate sound effects.

My son enjoys docking the shuttle with a star or planet and then accessing the Planetarium's data base to learn about it. DATABASE? That's right! The flip side of the Planetarium disk contains a database with a few lines of text on each object displayed by the Planetarium. Press the HELP key or joystick button for a short education on anything that attracts your eye.

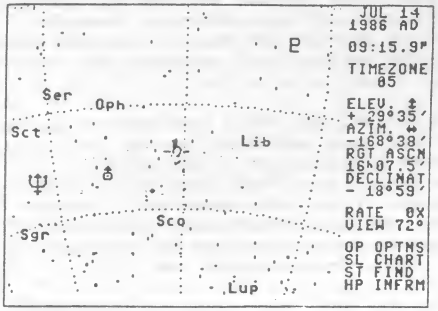
Your "window on the universe" has a field of view of 72 degrees. The Planetarium comes with a "zoom" function that will expand the detail in steps up to 8 times. The detail in the Planetarium is so good that, when zooming in on certain stars, they'll resolve themselves into double stars! The Atari Planetarium is a pretty good telescope! Looking for something special? A press on the START key will make sure you FIND it.

The Atari Planetarium will automatically shift your field of view to find any planet or constellation you select. You can find out when and where Mars, Venus, Pegasus, or whatever will be quickly and easily. The SKY screen displays the right ascension and declination of the object your cursor is on as well as the much more useful elevation and azimuth. Even a rank amateur such as myself

has no trouble finding the actual star in the sky after looking it up on the Planetarium. (A good pair of 7X50 binoculars or a telescope will be necessary for faint objects.)

You can quickly navigate around your sky by moving the cursor, and using the N, E, S, and W keys. An "O" command will show you if your favorite planet will be brightly illuminated because it's "in opposition" to the sun.

Phases of the moon are correctly shown as are the effects of the moon passing in front of a star or planet.



The Planetarium will put on a hell of a good eclipse for you. One evening, my son and I watched a solar eclipse reported by Cicero on June 21, 400 B.C. and a lunar eclipse reported by Thucydides in 413 B.C. (The lunar eclipse cost the Athenians a war.)

A CHART mode will allow you to generate star charts on your EPSON FX80 with GRAFTRAX or ATARI XMM801 (if you can find an XMM801).

As you can see, Atari Planetarium is a BUSY program; it's trying to do a lot with 8-bits. Suprisingly, the Atari shows no sign of strain under the tremendous load placed upon it by all the program's functions. Every function called is performed promptly and with suprisingly little hesitation. Somebody knew what they were doing.

The documentation is superlative! It does a good job of explaining how to use the program, but the programmer made THAT part easy. The best part of the 115 page, spiral-bound manual is the entertaining and informative adult introduction to the pleasures of astronomy. In addition to presenting the fundamentals, it provides an introduction to stellar navigation and archeo-astronomy. There are plenty of examples and "experiments" for your family to enjoy. Explore the Great Pyramid and the Stone Lion, you'll soon be wondering about Stonehenge! The documentation also features an index, glossary, bibliography, tech notes for "serious" astronomers, and lots of useful tables.

Atari Planetarium is a great piece of software for those of us who've ever looked up into the night sky and wondered what was out there. For parents, it's a great activity to share with your children. For teachers, the documentation alone will provide you with a week of classes and the program's speed will make sure your classes don't get restless.

For folks who enjoy impressive software, you can't do better! Frankly, the name "Atari Planetarium" is much too modest; I never saw a planetarium that could find a planet for you or print star charts. Some more impressive name is warranted for this product such as "The Stellar Spreadsheet", or "Universal Database," or a "Star Processor." Atari Planetarium and its excellent manual were developed and written by DELTRON Ltd. Nice work fellas and gals!

Atari Planetarium loaded and ran without problems on my Indus and 1050 drives. It would not run on a 1050 drive equipped with a U.S. Doubler.

Fletcher Memorial Hospital BBS
Lansing, MI
By: Randy Pearson

If your life is missing a little weirdness, and you'd like a little fun, look no further.

My name is Randy Pearson, and I run the only other Atari bulletin board in town, called the Fletcher Memorial Home. (If that name doesn't ring a bell, then what about Magrathea? That's the original name.)

Fletcher Memorial is set up a bit different than most BBSs. It's "theme" is that of, well, a crazy farm. But there's quite a bit to do at the Home.

Probably the thing people call for the most, if not for the message base, is for the humor files. In the Rubber Room, option -=>H<=-, you will find nearly 20 humorous stories, written by myself, and other users, funny articles from books, magazines, etc, and many other interesting, amusing concepts.

FM's Message base is indeed one of the livelier ones around, with discussion ranging from serious (like the existence of God, re-incarnation, and drive-in funeral homes) to funny (like taking an imaginary trip in search of the 'Dale of Diamonds') to just plain weird (like the dreaded Jelly Doughnut revolution of '85). So there is something for everyone.

Other interesting 'rooms' to look into are the <W>riter's Block, where there are short stories, and a novel I wrote, the <S>urvey section, the <E>ntertainment wing, with ATASCII and ASCII pictures, a thought for the Week, and even an online game in the works, <R>eviews of movies, and other worthwhile endeavors.

The Home is run using an Atari 800 with the 288K upgrade, (meaning a 240k RAMdisk), and a couple Atari 1050 disk drives, one in double density. The software is none other than Nite Lite, a menu-driven system (similar to the TBBS software used by Political Forum, LSJ-A, etc.) written by Paul Swanson.

If you're wondering why I haven't mentioned the download section yet, it's because we don't have one. My policy is, if ya wanna have fun, come on over. If ya wanna take programs, call CHAOS. That's what it's here for.

The number for the Fletcher Memorial Home is (517) 646-9114, 24 hours a day, 300 baud. We are located in sunny Dimondale, Michigan, and proud of being the first and only BBS in this great city!

Even though the board is run on an Atari, it is open for all computers. ALL are welcome!

So, if you have a decent sense of humor, and can stand a bit of weirdness, give us a call. You'll be glad you did, really!

Randy Pearson
SysOp

VIEWPOINT

ANOTHER HABA RIPOFF?
By: Gil Merciez

Haba Check Minder (Haba Systems $75) was released several months ago as an easy to use checking account manager for the ST. Amazingly, the program worked as advertised. My main gripe about the program was its exorbitant price. Had it sold for a more reasonable $35-40, Haba Check Minder might have had a chance at being an extremely popular program for those interested in computerizing their checking accounts.

It covered all the bases in its specific task of handling a checkbook but was a far cry from a complete home accounting and budgeting system. I've been using it for the past five months and have found it very easy to use and bug free. As far as program performance, I only quibble with the insane use of the tab key rather than the return key to accept data within a field. Most of Haba's previous releases had been either bug ridden or insubstantial in content. All were grossly overpriced.

A year or so ago Haba purchased Continental/Arrays, a company known for The Home Accountant, a rather complete and highly acclaimed home bookkeeping system that had enjoyed wide popularity on most popular computers. Learning to use The Home Accountant on the 8 bit Atari was a cumbersome process. Written in BASIC, the program was slow in execution and required constant disk access while loading in various modules and accessing the data disk. It was powerful, however, restricted more by the memory and disk drive limitations of the 8 bit machines than anything else.

Toward the end of 1985 I had heard that The Home Accountant was being ported to the ST but that work was stopped on the project. No reason was given. Then a month ago Home Accountant from Haba appeared on dealer shelves. Was this "The" Home Accountant upgraded to take advantage of the power of the 68000 chip? Unfortunately, no.

Dropping the the "The" from the name, Haba simply upgraded the Check Minder program adding a budget module and the ability to track credit cards. Despite the fact that there is ten times the memory in the standard 520 ST, Haba could not find the room to fit all the features that were present in the 8 bit 48K Atari version of The Home Accountant. Absent are graphing options, cash transactions, and asset and liability accounts. You can't prepare a comprehensive balance sheet.

To my way of thinking, Haba is trying to cash in on a popular name to which they now own the rights. Rather than offer an upgrade to owners of Check Minder, they have released Home Accountant as an entirely new product. The documentation is nothing more than a reprint of Check Minder with an additional few pages scattered throughout to cover the two additional features. Amazingly, the price for Home Accountant is the same $75 as is charged for Check Minder. I would have thought they might double the price. Still it's shamefully overpriced. Ron Grimes authored both of the releases.

I've just heard a report (unconfirmed as of this writing) that Haba has laid off all their employees while waiting for revenues for their just released MacIntosh Haba Word to start rolling in. If the ST community is lucky, perhaps there will not be enough revenues to keep Haba afloat. We don't need publishers of this caliber. Maybe there is yet some justice in the world!

Industry News

NEWS OF THE WIRE
excerpted from ZMAGAZINE 9/86

CompuServe linked its EasyPlex facility with MCI Mail, enabling subscribers of either service to send mail to people on the other. MCI also linked up with the DEC Email service "All in One," so those users can also send mail to CompuServe users. Thus, if you subscribe to COmpuServe, DEC, or MCI, you can send electronic mail to over 500,000 people. (With MCI Mail, you can also send mail by computer that is printed and delivered as paper mail to anyone in the world.)

AT&T Mail, used mostly by corporate subscribers, has a MAILTALK feature that lets you listen to your messages over a touch-tone telephone. Punch in your user name and a password and you'll hear a synthesized voice read your mail. The tinny voice sounds a bit like the robot from Lost in Space -- "Danger, Will Robinson!"

Lower connect-time rates in 1986 made computer communications more affordable. American People/Link's rates for non-prime time (6 PM to 7 AM) are down to $4.25 an hour, and for local Chicago access this rate applies 24 hours a day.

There's no extra charge for 1200- or 2400-baud, and PLINK regularly announces special "Party/Line" rates of $3.49 an hour and "Happy Hours".

GEnie only charges $5 an hour for non-prime hours (300- and 1200-baud).

Delphi and QuantumLink charge $6 an hour for non-prime usage, even for 2400-baud. While you still pay $12.50 for 1200-baud usage on CompuServe, the system recently stopped charging for the connect time while you upload files in any of the data libraries.

CompuServe signed an agreement with two Japanese companies who will market and support the service in its existing form in that country. Right now there are only 750 subscribers in Japan. The two Japanese firms will also develop their own version of CompuServe in Japanese.

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Last Hacks

IMPURE MATHEMATIX - Wherein it is related how that Polygon of Womanly Virtue, young Polly Nomial (our heroine) is accosted by that Notorious Villain Curly Pi, and factored (oh, horrors!). (Author and original scource unknown but appreciated!)

Once upon a time (1/T) Pretty Polly Nomial was strolling across a field of vectors when she came to the boundary of a singularly large matrix. Now Polly was covergent and her mother had made it an absolute condition that she never enter such an array with undefined variables. However, Polly was irregular that morning and was feeling especially badly behaved. She ignored her mother's condition on the basis that it was insufficient, and made her way amongst the complex elements. Rows and columns closed in from all sides. Tangents approached her surface. She became tensor and tensor. Quite suddenly, two branches of a hyperbola touched her at a single point. She oscillated violently, lost all sense of directrix, and went completely divergent. As she reached a turning point, she tripped over a square root that was protruding from the erf and plunged headlong down a steep gradient. When she rounded off once more, she found herself inverted, apparently alone, in a non-euclidean space.

She was being watched however. That smooth operator, Curly Pi, was lurking inerproduct. As his eyes devoured her curvilinear coordinates, a singular expression crossed his face. He wondered, was she still covergent? He decided to integrate improperly at once.

Hearing a common fraction behind her, Polly rotated and saw Curly Pi approaching with his power series extrapolated. She could see at once by his degenerate conic and dissipative terms that he was bent on no good.

"Arcsin!" she gasped, covering her verticies.

"Ho, Ho," he said. "What a symmetric little asymptote you have. I can see your angles have lots of secs."

"Oh , Sir," she protested, "keep away from me. I haven't got my brackets on."

"Calm yourself, my dear," said our suave operator. "Your fears are purely imaginary."

"i, i, " she thouught. "Perhaps he's not normal, but homologous."

"What order are you??" the brute demanded.

"Seventeen," replied Polly.

Curly leered, "I suppose you've never been operated on."

"Of course not," Polly replied quite properly, "I'm absolutely covergent!"

"Come, come" said Curly. "Let's off to a decimal place I know and I'll take you to the limit."

"NEVER!!" gasped Polly.

"Abcissa!!!" he swore as undertook his plot, his patience gone. Coshing her over the coefficient with a natural log until she was powerless, Curly removed her discontinuities. He stared at her significant places, and began smoothing out her points of inflection. Poor Polly. The algorithmic method was now her only hope. She felt his hand tending toward her asymptotic limit. Her covergence would soon be gone forever.

There was no mercy, for Curly was a heavyside operator. Curly's radius squared itself; Polly's loci quivered. He integrated her by parts. He integrated her by partial fractions. After he cofactored, he performed Runge-Cutta on her. The complex beast even went all the way around and did a contour integration. Curly went on operating until he had satisfied her hypothesis. Then, he exponentiated and became completely orthogonal.

When Polly got home that night, her mother noticed that she was no longer piecewise continuous, but had been truncated in several places. But, it was too late to differentiate now. As the months went by, Polly's denominator increased monotonically. Finally, she went to the L'Hospital and generated a small but pathological function which left surds all over the place and drove Polly to deviation.

The moral of our sad story is this:
"If you want to keep your expression covergent, never allow them a single degree of freedom."

"I'm sorry, sir, but our computer is down."

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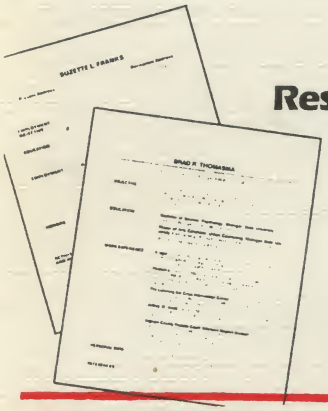

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